



CONNECTICUT AFL-CIO

56 Town Line Road, Rocky Hill, CT 06067

860-571-6191

fax: 860-571-6190

Testimony before the Labor and Public Employees Committee Tuesday, March 3, 2009

Senator Prague, Representative Ryan and members of the Labor and Public employees committee, my name is Lori Pelletier and I serve as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Connecticut AFL-CIO, which has over 900 affiliated local unions representing the working men and women from every one of our 169 cities and towns, and am here to testify in favor of the following bills.

H.B. No. 6502 (RAISED) Labor and Public Employees. AN ACT CONCERNING THE STANDARD WAGE FOR CERTAIN CONNECTICUT WORKERS. This bill provides some of the lowest wage earners with a chance to make ends meet. This bill makes good economic sense by putting more money in the hands of those who will use it and not stow it away. The Standard wage is a safety net that these workers can't survive without.

H.B. No. 6534 (RAISED) Labor and Public Employees. AN ACT CONCERNING LABOR UNION AUTHORIZATION CARD CHECKS. When workers decide to form a union in the private sector, corporate America spends billions of dollars a year fighting their efforts. This is not the way our government should operate. President Obama and our seven Congressional Representatives support this legislation and have signed on to the Employee Free Choice Act, which is pending the United State Congress as we speak. So while they debate the Federal law governing private sector unionization efforts we have an opportunity to fix Connecticut law with regards to public sector workers. Facts show that unionized workers are better for their local economy and their local community. By enacting this legislation workers would decide whether they wanted to belong to a union, but just as important our state and local tax dollars wouldn't be used against us.

Last year we saw how the Department of Public Safety used tax payer dollars to fight the Lt's in the Connecticut State Police Department, when they wanted to form a union. Those precious tax dollars should have been put to use protecting us instead they were used to trample on workers' rights. Study after study shows that nearly 70% of people would join a union if they could. Our local and state governments should not stand in their way. Tax dollars are not meant to be used to attack the very people who paid them. If workers want to form a union it is their right and our state and local governments should understand that.

S.B. No. 921 (RAISED) Labor and Public Employees. AN ACT CONCERNING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FOR STATE MANAGERS. We support this legislation. Workers should have the right to collectively bargain, and this legislation would remedy a historic exemption. State managers have bosses, are not elected and do not have the authority to hire/fire each other. Therefore we believe this legislation is completely appropriate for this class of workers.

Thank you to the Committee for holding this public hearing and if you have any question I'd be happy to address them.

PRESIDENT

John W. Olsen

**EXECUTIVE VICE
PRESIDENT**

Salvatore Luciano

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Lori J. Pelletier

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Leo Canty

**GENERAL VICE
PRESIDENT**

Brian Petronella

VICE PRESIDENTS

John A. Altieri

Linda Armstrong

Tammie Botelho

Thomas Bruenn

Peggy Buchanan

Wayne J. Burgess

Peter S. Carozza, Jr.

Everett Corey

Ben Cozzi

Dik Days

Kenneth DelaCruz

John Dirzius

Mark Espinosa

Bill Henderson

James Howell

Clarke King

Elizabeth Kuehnle

Thomas Ledoux

Mike Livingstone

Dwight Loines

Kevin Lynch

Steve Matthews

John McCarthy

Jeff Mellow

Jean Morningstar

Charles Page

Sharon M. Palmer

Steven Perruccio

Michael Petosa

Ronald Petronella

Robert Proto

Carmen Reyes

Robert Santo

Edward Sasso

Ray Soucy

Paul Wallace

Kurt Westby

Thomas Wilkinson